

## Entitlement Foods

Federal law mandates a national level of commodity support for schools for each meal served. This national assistance level is referred to as commodity entitlement. FNS ensures that enough foods are purchased and delivered to state distributing agencies to meet this commodity entitlement. The state distributing agencies then deliver these commodities equitably to schools in their State.

## Bonus Commodities

Occasionally, when unusually large surpluses occur, USDA makes commodities available to states at no “cost” to the schools’ entitlement. This food is considered a “bonus” to the states. Bonus purchases stabilize the market, support agriculture, and provide extra food assistance to schools.

USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W Whitten Building, 14<sup>th</sup> & Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**For additional information on commodities in the National School Lunch Program, contact one of these regional offices.**

### **Mid-Atlantic Regional Office**

**Phone: (609) 259-5050** (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Virginia, Virgin Islands, West Virginia)

### **Northeast Regional Office**

**Phone: (617) 565-6425** (Maine, Connecticut, New York, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, Massachusetts)

### **Midwest Regional Office**

**Phone: (312) 353-6673** (Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin)

### **Southeast Regional Office**

**Phone: (404) 562-7099** (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Tennessee)

### **Mountain Plains Regional Office**

**Phone: (303) 844-0366** (Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming)

### **Southwest Regional Office**

**Phone: (214) 290-9814** (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas)

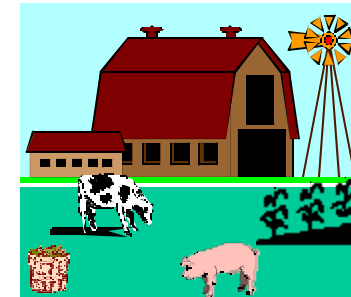
### **Western Regional Office**

**Phone : (415) 705-2229** (California, Alaska, Arizona, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Guam)

*This brochure may be downloaded from the Food Distribution web site at [www.fns.usda.gov/fdd](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd)*

**U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Food & Nutrition Service  
Food Distribution Division  
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Alexandria, VA 22302**

# From the Farm to the Schools





## Why USDA Buys and Distributes Food

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) food distribution programs provide two vital national services. It provides nutritious foods to our nation's children and needy adults and helps American farmers by supporting domestic agriculture and removing surpluses from the market.

USDA can provide these services because of the cooperative efforts of three of its agencies. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) distributes commodities to schools and other outlets. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) provide farm support by purchasing the commodities.

It is the ever-changing marketplace that determines how much of each commodity USDA can buy and when it can be bought.

## USDA Provides Over a Billion Pounds of Food to Over 26 Million Schoolchildren a Year

The main beneficiaries of USDA's Food Distribution Programs are American children in schools that participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs.

USDA offers approximately 80 different types of commodities for distribution to schools. The Department strives to buy foods that support the ***Dietary Guidelines for Americans***. These guidelines are a set of Federal recommendations that promote healthful eating. USDA continually improves its commodities to ensure that the foods are nutritious and acceptable to children.



Depending on the district, commodities can represent from 15 to 20 percent of the market value of the food served. The foods that USDA donates vary depending on what farm products are available. To provide more pounds of food per dollar and fully support agricultural markets in need,

USDA purchases basic staple items. For example, USDA sends flour to schools, not bread or highly processed items.

Under its surplus-removal programs, AMS buys fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, and poultry items when supply exceeds demand, removing them from the regular channels of trade.



FSA obtains other foods, such as grain, dairy, vegetable oil, and peanut products.

In school year 2000, USDA provided over 1 billion pounds of food to schools. About half of the commodities purchased were grains, fruit and vegetable products. The other half were nuts, oil, dairy, fish, pork, and beef.

